

REMARKSPending Claims

Claims 15-22 have been amended and are the pending claims.

Interview

Applicants extend their appreciation to the Examiner for granting an office Interview in the above-identified application, which included Mr. Christian Laforgia of the Patent Office. In the Interview, the rejection of claims 15 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Doggett et al, U.S. Patent No. 5,677,955, was discussed. The Examiner stated that a formal reply to the Office Action would be considered. Accordingly, Applicants submit the following formal reply.

35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 15-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Doggett et al (Doggett), U.S. Patent No.

5,677,955. Applicants request reconsideration of the rejection for the following reasons.

In accordance with the discussions in the Interview, Applicants have amended the claims to clarify that which the Applicants regard as the invention. In claim 15, for example, Applicants have stated that the certificate comprises an IC chip attached to the certificate that stores the first information. According to claim 15, a digital signature that is printed on the surface of the certificate is generated from the first information stored in the IC chip and from the second information that is printed on the surface of the certificate. Applicants point out that the recitation of a "surface" of the certificate clarifies that the certificate is of tangible form, as opposed to electronic form. Further, Applicants have clarified that the electronic tag is an IC chip since the embodiment of the IC chip is mentioned frequently throughout the specification.

Claim 19 is directed to an apparatus for issuing a certificate and has been amended in a manner similar to that of claim 15. In particular, a certificate paper-accommodating part is claimed that accommodates certificates comprising an

attached IC chip. Accordingly, claim 19 includes the combination of first information stored in an IC chip, second information and a digital signature on a surface of the certificate wherein the digital signature is generated from the first information and the second information.

According to the present invention, certificates have IC chips attached in order to minimize the possibility of forgery of the certificate. Generally, certificates have important information printed on the surface of the certificate, such as face value information for example. According to the present invention, first information stored in the IC and second information printed on the surface of the certificate are encrypted by a secret key, for example, and a digital signature is printed on the surface of the certificate. The digital signature, the first information and the second information are processed for authentication purposes, and there is a match, then the certificate is deemed to be authentic.

As an example of a certificate incorporating the embodiments of the invention, Fig. 18 shows a certificate 1802 having an attached IC chip 1810. Important information 1804

and information in the IC chip 1810 are encrypted with a secret key and the result is printed on the certificate as information 1808. By decryption of the information 1808 with a public key, information corresponding to both the information in the IC chip and the information of the face value 1804 can be obtained. By comparing the obtained information with the actual printed information, the authenticity of the certificate can be confirmed.

In Doggett, the object of the invention is to provide an electronic instrument that enables financial transactions without the use of paper. For example, the electronic payment instruction of Doggett is disclosed as being created to electronically mimic existing paper check processes for enabling its ready acceptance in the marketplace. See col. 5, lines 31-35 of Doggett and col. 13, line 61-Col 14, line 64 of the reference in which Doggett discloses the processing of electronic checks. Specifically, an electronic check is disclosed in which the security element of the electronic check is the electronic checkbook which is provided in the form of a PCMCIA card. Alternatively, a smart card or a smart disk may be used.

None of the embodiments of the electronic check or electronic checkbook of Doggett disclose or suggest the certificate or apparatus for issuing a certificate as set forth in the claimed invention, which requires an IC chip attached to a certificate that stores first information, in combination with second information and a digital signature printed on a surface of the certificate wherein the digital signature is generated from the first information and the second information. Accordingly, Doggett does not disclose or suggest the invention as set forth in claims 15-22 and therefore the 35 U.S.C. §102 rejection should be withdrawn.

Request for Withdrawal of Finality of Office Action

Applicants filed a Request for Continued Examination on March 14, 2005 and received a final rejection on April 4, 2005. The rejection was made final because the claims were not amended, as pointed out in the Office Action. However, Applicants intended to have an interview with the Examiner before amending the claims, which is the reason that the claims had not been amended. Further, Applicants filed an Information Disclosure Statement with the RCE to ensure

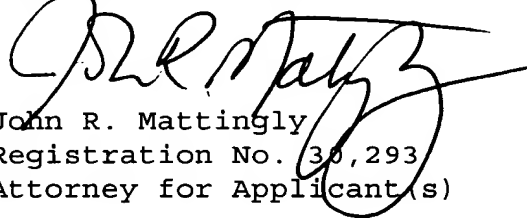
consideration of the references that have been cited in the related applications, which are also pending, however, before different examiners. Applicants are aware that the mailing of an Office Action within three weeks of the filing of an RCE is unusually quick processing by the Patent Office and as such, the Office Action should at least have been issued without having been made final. Accordingly Applicants request that the finality of the Office Action be withdrawn in order to permit entry of the foregoing amendments.

Alternatively, Applicants request that the amendments set forth herein be entered for the purpose of placing the application in condition for allowance or in better condition for appeal. The amendments to the claims do not set forth a new issue requiring an additional search or examination since the claim amendments are directed to substituting IC chip for electronic or electric tag in independent claims 15 and 19 in order to clarify that which the Applicants regard as the invention. Accordingly, the foregoing amendments should be entered for the purposes of placing the application in condition for allowance or for placing the application in better condition for appeal.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants contend that the above-identified application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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